SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Early Childhood Care and Education Sector Study:

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

September 2003

104-00735/

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	10
Project Overview	
A. Project Description	12
B. Objective	12
C. Project Deliverables	12
D. Partnership/Steering Committee	13
Methodology	
A. Project Coordinator	13
B. Literature Review	15
C. "Gap Analysis" Survey	15
D. Orientation for PLAR Advisors/Assessors/ Steering Committee	15
E. Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools and Processes	17
F. Marketing of the PLAR Process	18
Key Findings	
A. Project Coordinator	18
B. "Gap Analysis" Survey-Data Analysis	18
C. Orientation for PLAR Advisors/Assessors	26
D. Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools/Processes	27
E. Marketing of the PLAR Process	28
Recommendations and Next Steps for Future PLAR Implementation	
A. Recommendations	28
B. Next Steps	29
Appendix A - Regulation Changes	31
Appendix B - Literature Review	34
Appendix C - Early Childhood Education Certification Survey	38
Appendix D	43
-ECE PLAR Program Contact Checklist	44
-ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview	45
-ECE PLAR Interview/Exam Supervision Submission Form	47
-Early Childhood Education PLAR Student Survey	48
Appendix E - Candidate Power Point Presentation	51
Appendix F - Candidate Process for Prior Learning Assessment	54

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the work, input and direction of the following Early Childhood Education (ECE) Sector Partnership Steering Committee members:

Shirley Amichand, PLAR Facilitator, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

Gladys Hill, Program Manager, Sector Partnerships Saskatchewan Learning

Mary Jane Hornoi, President, Regina Family Child Care Homes Cooperative Ltd. (RFCCHCL)

Freida Iron, First Nations Child Care/Head Start Coordinator, Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC)

Cindy Jeanes, Program Manager (Southern Region), Child Day Care Branch, Department of Community Resources and Employment

Carla Kaeding, Full Time Vocational/ Technical Skills Training, Parkland Regional College)

Susanne McElhinney, ECE Program Head, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

Kathie McFarland, Consultant, Child Day Care Branch Department of Community Resources and Employment

Kim Orynik, PLAR Coordinator, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

Bev Peel, Manager of Children's Programs, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)

Linda Reiss, Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association (SECA)

Dana Sych, ECE PLAR Project Coordinator, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)

Nancy Tam, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Analyst, Institutions Branch Saskatchewan Learning

Executive Summary

Introduction

Early childhood educators are employed in Child Care Centres, Family Child Care Homes, Schools, Preschools, Nursery Schools, Early Childhood Special Needs Programs, Head Start Programs and Infant Centres. These employees, in many instances, have pursued learning in their field outside of the formal educational setting. They have *experientially* gained skills, knowledge, and competence through work experience, non-credit courses, industry training, self-study and volunteer activities.

In 2000 the child care industry was notified by the Child Day Care Branch, Department of Community Resources and Employment (formerly the Department of Social Services), of impending changes to the Saskatchewan Child Care Regulations. These regulatory changes, which came into effect on July 5, 2001, outlined the need for the upgrading of credentials for existing provincial child care educators. The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology's (SIAST) mandate is to provide education, training programs and services that meet the current and future needs of students, industry and the changing labour market. SIAST designed a proactive response to address the anticipated training needs of these workers seeking occupational certification.

Approximately 1100 early childhood educators are currently employed in one of the provinces 139 child care centres or 306 family child care home licensed by Child Day Care Branch. It is not economically feasible for employees in these occupations to quit their jobs to return to school full-time in order to obtain certification. It was projected that a significant percentage of these workers may benefit from participating in a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process to obtain occupational certification in a timely and cost effective manner.

In addition to regulatory changes, the demand for qualified early childhood educators continues to increase due to changes in traditional family structure. Women's participation in the workforce has substantially increased while extended families no longer live in close proximity to assist with child care. The traditional two-parent family has been replaced by diverse family structures. As the labour force increases and family structures change, child care demands will also increase. Therefore, it is important that adults who comprise the workforce have ready access to competent and well-trained early childhood educators.

The Government of Saskatchewan is cognizant of the need for a qualified child care sector and is ensuring this is met through a change in regulations that require an upgrading of credentials. SIAST can facilitate this move

towards certifying child care educators by developing a PLAR implementation model. To begin this process it was identified that a *gap analysis* of their training needs, in conjunction with the implementation of a *recognition of prior learning process* was required to assess what is needed to top-up their existing knowledge to meet legislated training requirements. It is anticipated that these individuals require diverse training options such as distance education, extension classes, and future online training to gain certification that will allow them to continue working in the child care sector. SIAST, on behalf of the sector, received funding from Saskatchewan Learning through the Job Start/Future Skills Sector Partnership Program to assist in the occupational certification of early childhood educators. Discussions with the Child Day Care Branch, confirmed support and contribution to provide in-kind assistance with respect to the gap analysis survey stage in this proposal.

The process/materials that were developed in this project will benefit the growth and coordination of the early childhood care and education sector. This PLAR implementation model could be adapted for future use by other industry sectors that may be faced with the need for new or enhanced training due to regulatory changes.

A "gap analysis", in conjunction with an implementation of a recognition of the prior learning process, provided the opportunity for industry to assess and identify training that is needed to assist child care educators in meeting legislative training requirements. Strategies were developed to address the diverse training needs of industry, including delivery options such as: distance education, extension classes, and future online training leading to certification. Piloting of PLAR assessment tools, processes and communication materials ensured that a coordinated PLAR process was implemented with efficiencies for the adult learner/employee and the employer.

Methodology

A project coordinator was hired to ensure that the following deliverables were carried out:

- ***Literature Review***
  A literature review was conducted to determine how other educational institutions and regulatory bodies have addressed PLAR as an option for early childhood educators to acquire credentials necessary to meet regulatory standards. A variety of colleges across Canada were contacted to obtain this data.

- **"Gap Analysis" Survey**
  Under consultation and direction from the Steering Committee a survey was developed and administered to early childhood educator working in licensed child care centres and homes and FSIN affiliated child care centres and Head Start programs throughout the province in the late fall of 2003. Out of approximately 1200 early childhood educators, 382 responded to the survey.

- **Orientation for PLAR Advisors/Assessors/Steering Committee**
  The Project Coordinator developed and presented an orientation presentation for PLAR advisors, assessors and steering committee members. Each presentation was specifically directed towards the information necessary for each group along with an overview of the entire project.

- **Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools and Processes**
  Assessment tools and processes were piloted. Assessors and students were asked to provide feedback so that changes could be made to improve the assessment tools and the overall PLAR process.

- **Marketing of the PLAR Process**
  Information was distributed through Child Daycare Branch Consultants, information tables at provincial and local conferences and presentations were made to various interested groups including child care centres, Tribal Councils and Regional Colleges. Assisted the SIAST PLAR Department in developing a SIAST PLAR CD(video).

Key Findings

The key findings provide insight for future recommendations and changes that occurred during the project.

- **Project Coordinator**
  While working with program heads, steering committee members, advisors, assessors, and candidates it became apparent the following concerns be addressed:
  -ensure clear and consistent communication between all parties; and
  -find effective and economical ways to address PLAR candidates completing a distance challenge.

- **"Gap Analysis" Survey**
  Majority of respondents work in licensed child care centres in the larger geographical centres. At the time of the survey only 32.5 % of

respondents had an assessment done by Child Daycare Branch identifying the level of qualifications they possess and what additional credentials they require to maintain their employment positions. 13.1% of respondents would prefer to enroll in full time courses while 49.7% indicated they would prefer part time enrollment. Distance education, extension courses and PLAR were identified as the most popular choices for obtaining their credentials. The PLAR process was most popular for Practicums. Financial reasons were cited as the greatest barrier for early childhood educators to obtain their credentials.

- **Orientation for PLAR Advisors/ Assessors**
  Any changes or updates need to be forwarded on to Advisors regularly. Assessors found that at times there was a break down of communication between program contacts, students and themselves.

- **Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools/Processes**
  Assessment tools need to be very clear for both candidates and assessors. Flexibility of assessor's schedule to accommodate candidates was crucial. The opportunity to complete PLAR challenges only twice a year is restrictive for many candidates and is seen as a barrier.

- **Marketing of the PLAR Process**
  Clear and concise information for all early childhood educators regarding the PLAR process and the difference between a SIAST ECE Certificate or Diploma and the certification awarded by Child Daycare Branch to meet Regulations is necessary.

Recommendations and Next Steps for Future PLAR Implementation

Recommendations:

- Assessment tools need to reflect course revisions well in advance of implementation date. Work with the Program, Research and Development department within SIAST to implement a built-in mechanism to trigger such revisions.

- To maximize response rate for future "Gap Analysis" surveys, consider the following prior to requesting the completion of the survey:
  -Educate the target group about the PLAR process and how it can benefit; and
  -Allow sector time to absorb regulatory changes and the implications of the changes.

- Design a brochure that outlines the PLAR process and training options for mass distribution to target group through:
  -Mail outs through regulatory bodies (e.g. Child Day Care Branch)
  -Post on supporting association websites (e.g. Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association); and
  -Information table set up at provincial conferences.

- Assign a centralized coordinator within the education/training institute to coordinate PLAR implementation.

- Design a strategy to promote and market PLAR to all stakeholders:
  -Emphasize benefits that PLAR can provide to overcome barriers to receiving credentials;
  -Identify 'natural' groupings of target audience (conferences, meetings, etc.) and deliver presentations to encourage involvement and support from stakeholders; and
  -market SIAST PLAR CD (video).

- Enhance existing linkages and partnerships throughout regions and among aboriginal and non-aboriginal community partners within the sector to share information, dialogue, problem solve, coordinate initiatives, etc.

- Create flexibility for conducting assessments at various times of the year to accommodate the demand.

- Access to pre-assessment guidance is critical for mapping an appropriate learning/training plan for employee, adult learner, and employer. Align the PLAR assessment intakes to the same timelines for Extension semesters and explore the feasibility of a continuous intake to best accommodate appropriate learning/training plans.

- Develop web-based documents where appropriate. (e.g. Information and Self-Audit Guide). Revisit navigation links to ensure ready access to information on a regular basis.

- When designing a survey instrument provide an expanded, detailed section which identifies barriers to working towards credentials.

Next Steps

- Dissemination of the final report to Steering Committee Members and stakeholders.
- Explore the viability of a centralized coordinator within the education/training institution to coordinate PLAR implementation.

- Design a strategy to promote and market PLAR to all stakeholders:
  -emphasize the benefits that PLAR can provide to overcome barriers to receiving credentials;
  -identify 'natural' groupings of target audience (conferences, meetings, Child Day Care Branch, FSIN, etc.); and
  -market the SIAST PLAR CD (video).
- SIAST should continue to take the lead in facilitating meetings of the Steering Committee to ensure that strategies and recommendations developed in the report are addressed.

1. Introduction

Early childhood educators are employed in Child Care Centres, Family Child Care Homes, Schools, Preschools, Nursery Schools, Early Childhood Special Needs Programs, Head Start Programs and Infant Centres. These employees, in many instances, have pursued learning in their field outside of the formal educational setting. They have *experientially* gained skills, knowledge, and competence through work experience, non-credit courses, industry training, self-study and volunteer activities.

In 2000 the child care industry was notified by the Child Day Care Branch, Department of Community Resources and Employment (formerly the Department of Social Services), of impending changes to the Saskatchewan Child Care Regulations. These regulatory changes, which came into effect on July 5, 2001, outlined the need for the upgrading of credentials for existing provincial child care educators (Appendix A). Since the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology's (SIAST) mandate is to provide education, training programs and services that meet the current and future needs of students, industry and the changing labour market. SIAST designed a proactive response to address the anticipated training needs of these workers seeking occupational certification.

Approximately 1100 early childhood educators are currently employed in one of the provinces 139 child care centres or 306 family child care home licensed by Child Day Care Branch. It is not economically feasible for employees in these occupations to quit their jobs to return to school full-time in order to obtain certification. It was projected that a significant percentage of these workers may benefit from participating in a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)[1] process to obtain occupational certification in a timely and cost effective manner.

In addition to regulatory changes, the demand for qualified early childhood educators continues to increase due to changes in traditional family structure. Women's participation in the workforce has substantially increased while extended families no longer live in close proximity to assist with child care. The traditional two-parent family has been replaced by diverse family structures. As the labour force increases and family structures change, child

---

[1] Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process that assesses and recognizes an individual's knowledge and skills regardless of where or how the learning was acquired. Within a post-secondary learning system, a PLAR process generally involves the assessment of experiental learning for educational credit or occupational certification with reference to the standards of the credential granting body. Experiential learning can be formal (e.g., workplace based learning, non-credit courses) or informal (e.g., learning resulting from life experiences, hobbies, volunteer activities, family chores, etc.). *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Referral Guide: Pathways for Learning Recognition. (2003)Saskatchewan Learning, page 6.*

care demands will also increase. Therefore, it is important that adults who comprise the workforce have ready access to competent and well-trained early childhood educators.

The Government of Saskatchewan is cognizant of the need for a qualified child care sector and is ensuring this is met through a change in regulations that require an upgrading of credentials. SIAST can facilitate this move towards certifying child care educators by developing a PLAR implementation model. To begin this process it was identified that a *gap analysis* of their training needs, in conjunction with the implementation of a *recognition of prior learning process(RPL)*[2], was required to assess what is needed to top-up their existing knowledge to meet legislated training requirements. It is anticipated that these individuals require diverse training options such as distance education, extension classes, and future online training to gain certification that will allow them to continue working in the child care sector. SIAST, on behalf of the sector, received funding from Saskatchewan Learning through the Job Start/Future Skills Sector Partnership Program to assist in the occupational certification of early childhood educators. Discussions with the Child Day Care Branch, confirmed support and contribution to provide in-kind assistance with respect to the gap analysis survey stage in this proposal.

The process/materials that were developed in this project will benefit the growth and coordination of the early childhood care and education sector. This PLAR implementation model could be adapted for future use by other industry sectors that may be faced with the need for new or enhanced training due to regulatory changes.

A "gap analysis", in conjunction with an implementation of a recognition of the prior learning process, provided the opportunity for industry to assess and identify training that is needed to assist child care educators in meeting legislative training requirements. Strategies were developed to address the diverse training needs of industry, including delivery options such as: distance education, extension classes, and future online training leading to certification. Piloting of PLAR assessment tools, processes and communication materials ensured that a coordinated PLAR process is implemented efficiently for the adult learner/employee and the employer.

---

[2] The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) includes recognition practices undertaken in the fields of qualification recognition (QR), credit transfer (CT) and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR). *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Referral Guide: Pathways for Learning Recognition. (2003)Saskatchewan Learning, page 3.*

2. Project Overview

A) Project Description

In the fall of 2002, funding was provided to assist SIAST, in partnership with industry and key stakeholders to conduct a "gap analysis" and implement a PLAR process/model. This project's goal was to facilitate the occupational certification of early childhood educators in response to recent regulatory changes.

B) *Objective*

The overall objective of the project was to develop and implement a PLAR process that would:

- Assist early childhood educators to obtain occupational certification and maintain employment in their field;
- Assist those who desire further education and are working in areas other than regulated daycare; and
- Serve as a PLAR model that other industry sectors can adopt and modify.

C) *Project Deliverables*

Project funding enabled the following activities to be completed:

- literature Review/Consultative Research;
- "gap analysis" (design, conduct and analyze a survey of current learning and certification needs in the field);
- development and delivery of orientation workshops for PLAR advisors and assessors in this field;
- pilot and refine PLAR assessment tools/processes with target groups in daycare centres and through linkages with the Aboriginal daycare centres and Regional Colleges;
- report on the project's pilot activities and make recommendations for future PLAR implementation strategies; and
- develop a "model" of the PLAR process and "package it" for other sectors to adopt/modify (e.g. short video with corresponding booklet of "why do PLAR" and "how to do PLAR" from an industry/education partnership perspective).

D) *Partnership/Steering Committee*

In order to facilitate this project, partnering with the following industry members and key stakeholders was necessary to establish a steering committee to provide a variety of perspectives on the objectives and outcomes:

- Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges (ASRC)
- Child Day Care Branch, Department of Community Resources and Employment
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)
- Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC)
- Regina Family Child Care Homes Cooperative Ltd. (RFCCHCL)
- Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association (SECA)
- Saskatchewan Early Childhood Directors Association (SECDA)
- Saskatchewan Government Employees Union (SGEU)
- Saskatchewan Learning
- SIAST Early Childhood Education (Program Heads and Extension Consultants)
- SIAST PLAR Office

4. Methodology

A) *Project Coordinator*

A Project Coordinator was hired to:

- Identify and contact possible Steering Committee members (including members from industry, regulatory bodies, regional colleges, appropriate unions, etc.);
- Organize, prepare run and report on all Steering Committee meetings;
- Design, deliver, validate and analyze results of "Gap Analysis" survey in consultation with steering committee members, Child Day Care Branch and Program Research and Development, SIAST;
- Identify, research and compile data for relevant issues of interest pertaining to the successful completion of the project for Literature Review/Research purposes;
- Develop and deliver counselor orientation at all three campuses. Ensure that counselors have copies of the Information and Self-Audit Guides and brochures. Keep counselors updated on any changes regarding PLAR for the program;

- Develop and deliver presentations across the province to promote PLAR as another option for Early Childhood Educators to obtain their credentials. (this includes manning an information table at various early childhood conferences) (Appendix E);
- Develop and deliver PLAR information session for Child Day Care Branch Consultants and staff across the province;
- Field inquires from interested candidates, regional colleges, etc.
- In cooperation with Project Manager and Human Resources, develop job description and assist in the hiring of a qualified assessor;
- Calculate hours/days necessary to hire an Assessor in consultation with Program Head and HR. Ensure that staffing request is completed and submitted to HR. Review applicants and participate in Assessor interviews if necessary;
- Develop and deliver Assessor Orientation;
- Mentor assessors;
- Develop and refine the following forms to ensure smooth running of the PLAR process for candidates, assessors and ECE staff (Appendix D):
  -ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview;
  -ECE PLAR Program Contact Checklist;
  -ECE PLAR Interview/Exam Supervision Submission; and
  -Early Childhood Education PLAR Student Survey.
- Prepare Assessor material packages which include the following for each intake of candidates (January, May/June):
  -list of PLAR candidates along with courses they are challenging;
  -completed *ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview* and *ECE PLAR Program Contact Checklist* forms for each candidate;
  -confirmation from Registration Services of registration and payment for each candidate;
  -copies of *ECE PLAR Interview/Exam Supervision Submission* forms for distance candidates;
  -copies of *Early Childhood Education PLAR Student Surveys* with self addressed envelopes for each candidate to complete and return at the end of their assessment;
  -copies of relevant PLAR Assessment Tools;
  -relevant course manuals, coursepacks, textbooks and reference materials;
  -contact information for ECE instructors and courses they teach for consultative purposes;
  -Results of Prior Learning Assessment forms for each candidate;
  -Copy of the *ECE PLAR Information and Self-Audit Guide* and brochure; and
  -Time sheets for payroll purposes.
- Develop, pilot and refine Assessment Tools in consultation with assessors and instructors;
- Refine and update *ECE PLAR Information and Self-Audit Guide* and brochure as necessary;

- Develop a "model" of the PLAR process in consultation with Steering Committee;
- Complete a *Final Report* for distribution to industry and key stakeholders; and
- Participate in Steering Committees for other PLAR Sector Projects.

B) *Literature Review*

A literature review was conducted to determine how other educational institutions and regulatory bodies have addressed PLAR as an option for early childhood educators to acquire credentials necessary to meet regulatory standards. Various colleges were contacted for information. Information required for completion of this study was obtained through a review of this literature. A summary of the literature review is attached (Appendix B).

C) *"Gap Analysis" Survey*

Under consultation and direction from the Steering Committee a survey (Appendix C) was developed and administered during late fall 2002 to early childhood educators working in Saskatchewan licensed child care centres and family child care homes (approximately 1000 educators) and FSIN affiliated daycare centres and Head Start programs (approximately 200 educators). 382 early childhood educators responded to the survey.

D) *Orientation for PLAR Advisors/Assessors/Steering Committee*

Advisors:

Prior to this project, the Early Childhood Education program in cooperation with the SIAST PLAR Department, developed an *ECE PLAR Information and Self-Audit Guide* along with an accompanying brochure. SIAST's counseling department assigns one counselor to cover ECE concerns and inquiries at each of the three campuses. At the start of the project, ECE designated counselors and the program heads at each campus (Wascana, Regina; Kelsey, Saskatoon; and Woodland, Prince Albert) met with the Project Coordinator and Project Manager. The following information was discussed:

- SIAST PLAR procedure; (Appendix F)
- The counsellor's role in the PLAR process;
- The ECE PLAR Information and Self-Audit Guide and how PLAR candidates can use the document to assist in meeting their educational needs; and

- Clarify any questions they may have regarding the process or the ECE program.

Assessors:

Due to the workload of the instructors in the base programs, an outside assessor was hired for PLAR challenges. To best accommodate the administration aspect of the PLAR process, it was decided to offer PLAR challenges twice a year. Students are required to register by November 15 for the January assessment and by March 15 for the May/June assessment.

The Project Coordinator worked closely with the Assessor on the first assessment in January of 2003. Assessors received a package with the following:

- candidate list (including phone numbers, addresses, courses being challenged, the number of hours the assessor will be paid for and the date that each candidate will have their evidence submitted by);
- completed *ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview* forms for each candidate (indicates specific instructions for each candidate);
- *ECE PLAR Information and Self Audit Guide* and *ECE PLAR* brochure;
- Necessary course manuals, coursepacks, textbooks and any other necessary support materials (e.g. *Day Care Licensee Manual*);
- List of ECE instructors and contact information for assessor to access for clarification of course content;
- *ECE PLAR Student Surveys* and addressed envelopes for each student to complete after the PLAR experience;
- "*Results of Prior Learning Assessment*" forms for each candidate; and
- copies of *ECE PLAR Interview/Exam Supervision* forms for students completing a distance challenge (required for phone interviews and exams).

The Project Coordinator and Assessor took approximately 1-2 hours to discuss the following:

- the PLAR philosophy (e.g. assess what the candidate already knows, not what they are currently learning);
- any special arrangements necessary to accommodate candidates;
- Assessment Tools for each course; and
- Forms included in the package (Appendix D).

After the initial meeting, the Assessor took some time to review the materials and identify any questions or concerns they had regarding the process or the challenges. The Project Coordinator and Assessor met for a second time to clarify any questions or concerns. After the second meeting, the Assessor contacted the Project Coordinator whenever clarification was necessary. It is necessary for the Assessor to have access to an ECE contact for support during their contract. Assessors were asked to keep records of any questions, concerns or suggestions in order to improve the PLAR process for candidates and assessors.

Steering Committee:

During the initial contact between the Project Coordinator and prospective committee members, the following information was discussed:

- Outline of the project;
- Time frame and time commitment of committee members (meet 4-5 times over a 10 month period for one day meetings);
- Financial commitment of committee members (committee members are responsible for their own travel costs); and
- Their role in the success of the project and the value to their organization.

Committee members met four times between September 1, 2002 and June 30, 2003 for an all day meeting. Location of each meeting alternated between Saskatoon and Regina to best accommodate travel for committee members.

E) *Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools and Processes*

Assessment Tools

Assessment tools were piloted. Assessors were requested to identify any problems or concerns to the Project Coordinator to help accommodate revisions.

PLAR Assessment Processes

Two sets of assessments were completed (January and May/June) during the project. To ensure that the all the steps in the PLAR process are completed, the *ECE PLAR Program Contact Checklist* was developed (Appendix D).

F) *Marketing of the PLAR Process*

Marketing of the PLAR process for early childhood educators was extremely important. The following marketing strategies were implemented:

- manned information tables were set up at a variety of provincial early childhood education conferences throughout the year;
- information presentations were conducted for the Child Daycare Branch Consultants (Northern and Southern Regions);
- information packages were provided for ECE mini-conferences throughout the province;
- candidate presentations were developed and delivered to interested groups around the province such as child care centres, Tribal Councils, Regional Colleges, etc. (Appendix E); and
- assisted the SIAST PLAR Department in the development of a SIAST PLAR CD(video) for future marketing of PLAR in other sectors.

5. Key Findings

A) *Project Coordinator*

Coordination between the Program Heads at Kelsey (Saskatoon) Wascana (Regina) and Woodland (Prince Albert) campuses, Steering Committee members, Advisors, Assessors, candidates and any other interested parties is fundamental for the PLAR process to be successful. The Project Coordinator played an intricate role in keeping all interested parties informed of the following concerns, changes or need for input:

- need for ECE Program contacts to identify any special arrangements made with candidates, record and forward them on to Assessors;
- ways to accommodate distance students when an Assessment Tool requires the Assessor to observe the student at their current place of employment without an extra expense to the candidate or the program;
- the need to develop a form for candidates to complete to accommodate exams/interviews to be done at a distance; and
- the need to ensure that information and instructions distributed to candidates is consistent from campus to campus to ensure that the assessment is fair.

B) "Gap Analysis" Survey - Data Analysis

Approximately 1200 surveys were distributed to early childhood educators employed in child care facilities licensed by the Child Day Care Branch or affiliated with FSIN. 382 early childhood educators completed and

returned the survey. The following data was gathered from the survey(Appendix C):

1). *Are you currently employed by:*

82.7 % (316)	licensed daycare centre
6% (23)	licensed family child care home
6% (23)	other (Head Start Programs or On-Reserve daycare centres)
3.4% (13)	preschool
1.8% (7)	no response

- Surveys were only sent to Saskatchewan Licensed daycare centres and family child care homes and Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) affiliated on reserve Daycare Centres and Head Start Programs.
- Many licensed family child care home providers did not respond to the survey. Several explained that they are not required to update credentials if they already have an existing licensed home and therefore did not feel the need to complete the survey. New home providers will have to meet established credentials as stated in the Child Care Regulations, 2001.

2). *Work Postal Code:*

- The respondents were from the following locations:

39% (148)	Regina
18%(69)	Saskatoon
18%(69)	Prince Albert
14% (53)	Lloydminster/North Battleford
8% (30)	Northern Saskatchewan
3% (12)	other

3). *Do you possess the following pre-requisites for the Certificate and Diploma programs: Grade 12, English Language Arts A30 and B30?*

78%(298)	have pre-requisite
14.9%(57)	do not have pre-requisite
7.1% (27)	no response

- Majority of respondents posses the pre-requisites for Certificate and Diploma.

- Those who don't posses the pre-requisites can take up to 6 courses without enrolling in the program (Open Access Policy) which would allow them to complete the minimum 120 hour course to meet Day Care Branch's Educator I requirements (upgrading would be required if the student wishes to pursue either the Certificate or Diploma or special admissions pursued through an ECE Program Head).

4). *If you have had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Child Day Care Branch answer Box A. If you have not had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Child Day Care Branch answer Box B.*

Assessment Done By Child Day Care Branch (Box A) - Highest Level of Child Day Care Branch Certification:

32.5%(124)	Have not had assessment completed
24.1% (92)	Early Childhood Educator I
23.3%(89)	Early Childhood Educator II
20.2%(77)	Early Childhood Educator III

Assessment ***Not*** Done By Child Day Care Branch (Box B) - Highest Level of Education Candidate Possess:

71.7%(274)	no response
13.1%(50)	other (university degrees/courses in various disciplines; Teacher Assistant Certificate, Rehabilitation Worker Diploma, and various workshops)
6.8%(26)	120-hour introductory course (Orientation)
4.7%(18)	Diploma in Early Childhood Education
3.7%(14)	Certificate in Early Childhood Education

5). *Do you possess any courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc. from another accredited institution that may qualify for transfer credit to a SIAST course?*

42.9%(164) no
30.45(116) no response
26.7%(102) yes

- Bachelor of Education, Office Education, Bachelor of Arts(psychology, sociology, social work), Home Care/Special Care, Rehabilitation, etc.

6). *Would you prefer to enroll in courses on a full-time or part-time basis?*

37.2%(142) no response
49.7% (190) part time
13.1%(50) full time

7). *Which method do you think you might use to obtain credit for Early Childhood Education courses?*

Certificate Courses
total respondents -382
1st - preferred method
2nd-second choice

Course	PLAR	Extension	Distance Education	Base Program	Regional Colleges	No Response
Child Development Courses						
ECE 142 Health, Safety and Nutrition (1st)	7.3% (28)	8.9% (34)	8.1% (31)	3.7% (14)	3.9% (15)	68.1% (260)
(2nd)	3.4% 13	6.5% (25)	12.0% (46)	2.6% (10)	3.9% (15)	28.5% (109)
ECE 181 Observation of Children	7.3% (28)	8.1% (31)	7.6% (29)	3.9% (15)	3.7% (14)	69.4% (265)
	2.9% (11)	6.8% (26)	11.0% (42)	2.6% (10)	3.7% (14)	73.0% (279)
HUMD 181 Lifespan Development I	5.0% (19)	7.6% (29)	8.4% (32)	3.7% (14)	3.9% (15)	71.5% (273)
	2.9% (11)	6.3% (24)	9.7% (37)	2.6% (10)	3.9% (15)	74.6% (285)
Relationship Courses						
COMM 153 Communication Techniques	8.4% (32)	8.4% (32)	11.8% (45)	3.7% (14)	4.5% (17)	63.4% (242)
	3.4% (13)	8.9% (34)	11.8% (45)	3.1% (12)	4.7% (18)	68.1% (260)
COMM 291 Interpersonal Communications	7.6% (29)	8.1% (31)	10.5% (40)	3.7% (14)	5.0% (19)	65.2% (249)
	2.9% (11)	8.4% (32)	11.5% (44)	3.4% (13)	3.9% (15)	69.9% (267)
HUMD 183 Child Guidance	6.3% (24)	8.1% (31)	11.3% (43)	3.7% (14)	4.2% (16)	66.5% (254)
	3.7% (14)	7.6% (29)	10.7% (41)	2.9% (11)	4.5% (17)	70.7% (270)
HUMR 181 Professionalism I	7.3% (28)	8.9% (34)	11.3% (43)	3.7% (14)	4.5% (17)	64.4% (246)
	3.1% (12)	8.6% (33)	12.0% (46)	3.4% (13)	4.2% (16)	68.6% (262)
SOCI 142 Family and Community Relations	8.1% (31)	9.2% (35)	12.8% (49)	3.7% (14)	4.2% (16)	62.0% (237)
	3.1% (12)	9.2% (35)	12.0% (46)	3.1% (12)	4.5% (17)	68.1% (260)
SUPP 182 Helping Skills	7.1% (27)3.	8.6% (33)	12.6% (48)	3.7% (14)	4.7% (18)	63.4% (242)
	4% (13)	8.6% (33)	12.3% (47)	3.4% (13)	4.7% (18)	67.5% (258)

Course	PLAR	Extension	Distance Education	Base Program	Regional Colleges	No Response
Programming Courses						
ECE 182 Programming I	6.3% (24) 2.9% (11)	8.4% (32) 6.5% (25)	10.5% (40) 10.7% (41)	3.7% (14) 3.1% (12)	4.5% (17) 4.5% (17)	66.8% (255) 72.3% (276)
ECE 183 Programming II	6.8% (26) 3.9% (15)	8.6% (33) 7.9% (30)	12.6% (48) 11.3% (43)	3.7% (14) 3.7% (14)	4.7% (18) 4.7% (18)	63.6% (243) 68.6% (262)
ECE 184 Programming III	7.6% (29) 3.7% (14)	9.4% (36) 8.4% (32)	12.8% (49) 13.4% (51)	3.7% (14) 3.7% (14)	4.7% (18) 4.7% (18)	61.8% (236) 66.2% (253
ECE 185 Programming IV	7.9% (30) 3.9% (15)	8.9% (34) 8.6% (33)	13.1% (50) 12.8% (49)	3.7% (14) 3.7% (14)	4.7% (18) 4.7% (18)	61.8% (236) 66.2% (253)
HUMD 182 Play and Play Environments	8.1% (31) 3.1% (12)	8.6% (33) 8.9% (34)	12.3% (47) 12.8% (49)	3.7% (14) 3.7% (14)	4.5% (17) 4.7% (18)	62.8% (240) 66.8% (255)
Related Courses						
CPR 180 "CPR"	4.7% (18) 2.4% (9)	8.1% (31) 6.8% (26)	4.5% (17) 6.8% (26)	3.9% (15) 2.6% (10)	5.5% (21) 4.7% (18)	73.3% (280) 76.7% (293)
FAID 189 First Aid	4.2% (16) 2.6% (10)	7.9% (30) 6.0% (23)	4.2% (16) 6.8% (26)	3.9% (15) 2.6% (10)	5.0% (19) 4.5% (17)	74.9% (286) 77.5% (296)
PRAC 178 Practicum I	11.3% (43) 2.9% (11)	7.6% (29) 8.1% (31)	7.1% (27) 10.7% (41)	3.9% (15) 3.4% (13)	4.7% (18) 3.9% (15)	65.4% (250) 709% (271)
PRAC 179 Practicum II	11.3%(4 3) 2.9% (11)	8.1% (31) 8.4% (32)	7.3% (28) 11.0% (42)	3.9% (15) 3.4% (13)	4.7% (18) 3.9% (15)	64.7% (247) 70.4% (269)
PRAC 180 Practicum III	11.0% (42) 2.6% (10)	8.4% (32) 9.2% (35)	7.3% (28) 11.5% (44)	3.9% (15) 3.4% (13)	5.0% (19) 3.9% (15)	64.4% (246) 69.4% (265)
PRAC 181 Practicum IV	11.0% (42) 2.6% (10)	8.4% (32) 9.2% (35)	7.6% (29) 11.3% (43)	3.9% (15) 3.4% (13)	5.0% (19) 3.9% (15)	64.1% (245) 69.6% (266)

Diploma Courses
total respondents -382
1st - preferred method
2nd-second choice

Course	PLAR	Extension	Distance Education	Base Program	Regional Colleges	No Response
Child Development Courses						
ECE 221 Observation and Assessment (1st)	12.6% (48)	12.8% (49)	13.4% (51)	4.7% (18)	5.2% (20)	51.3% (196)
(2nd)	3.9% (15)	10.7% (41)	17.5% (67)	3.7% (14)	5.8% (22)	58.4% (223)
HUMD 280 Lifespan Development II	11.5% (44)	12.3% (47)	14.1% (54)	3.9% (15)	5.2% (20)	52.9% (202)
	3.9% (15)	11.5% (44)	16.2% (62)	3.7% (14)	5.2% (20)	59.4% (227)
ECE 225 Infant and Toddler Care	12.0% (46)	12.0% (46)	14.1% (54)	4.7% (18)	5.0% (19)	52.1% (199)
	4.7% (18)	11.8% (45)	16.8% (64)	3.9% (15)	5.8% (22)	57.1% (218)
Relationship Courses						
COMM 294 Verbal Communication	11.5% (44)	12.8% (49)	14.1% (54)	4.7% (18)	5.2% (20)	51.6% (197)
	5.0% (19)	11.0% (42)	16.5% (63)	3.7% (14)	6.0% (23)	42.1% (161)
ECE 281 Agency Visitation	11.3% (43)	13.9% (53)	14.4% (55)	4.5% (17)	5.2% (20)	50.8% (194)
	4.7% (18)	11.5% (44)	16.5% (63)	3.7% (14)	7.1% (27)	56.5% (216)
MGMT 281 Behavioural Principles and Practices	11.8% (45)	13.6% (52)	14.4% (55)	4.5% (17)	5.2% (20)	50.5% (193)
	4.5% (17)	11.0% (42)	17.3% (66)	3.9% (15)	6.0% (23)	57.3% (219)
PD 240 Professionalism II	12.0% (46)	13.1% (50)	14.9% (57)	4.7% (18)	5.2% (20)	50.0% (191)
	4.2% (16)	11.5% (44)	17.8% (68)	3.7% (14)	6.5% (25)	56.3% (215)
PRLP 282 Foundations of Early Childhood Education	11.3% (43)	13.1% (50)	16.0% (61)	4.7% (18)	5.0% (19)	50.0% (191)
	5.2% (20)	11.5% (44)	17.5% (67)	3.7% (14)	6.5% (25)	55.5% (212)
Programming Courses						
ECE 220 Anti-Bias Curriculum	11.8% (45)	14.1% (54)	14.9% (57)	4.5% (17)	5.2% (20)	49.5% (189)
	4.2% (16)	10.7% (41)	17.5% (67)	4.5% (17)	6.3% (24)	56.8% (217)
ECE 226 Program for School Age Children	11.3% (43)	13.6% (52)	14.7% (56)	5.0% (19)	5.0% (19)	50.5% (193)
	4.7% (18)	11.0% (42)	17.3% (66)	3.9% (15)	6.5% (25)	56.5% (216)

Course	PLAR	Extension	Distance Education	Base Program	Regional Colleges	No Respons
Related Courses						
ADMN 249 Administration for Early Childhood Educators	11.5% (44) 4.2% (16)	13.6% (52) 12.0% (46)	14.9% (57) 16.8% (64)	4.7% (18) 4.2% (16)	5.5% (21) 6.3% (24)	49.7% (190) 56.5% (216)
ADMN 281 Administrative Functions	11.5% (44) 4.5% (17)	13.9% (53) 13.1% (50)	14.7% (56) 17.0% (65)	5.0% (19) 3.9% (15)	5.2% (20) 6.3% (24)	49.7% (190) 55.2% (211)
BKPG 240 Record Keeping for Child Care Facilities	11.0% (42) 4.2% (16)	14.7% (56) 12.3% (47)	14.4% (55) 17.0% (65)	4.7% (18) 3.9% (15)	5.2% (20) 6.5% (25)	50.0% (190) 56.0% (214)
SPSY 281 Studies of Exceptionality A	10.5% (40) 4.2% (16)	14.1% (54) 13.1% (50)	14.1% (54) 15.7% (60)	5.0% (19) 3.9% (15)	5.0% (19) 6.5% (25)	51.3% (196) 56.5% (216)
SPSY 289 Children with Diverse Abilities	10.2% (39) 4.5% (17)	14.7% (56) 12.6% (48)	14.7% (56) 16.8% (64)	4.7% (18) 3.9% (15)	5.0% (19) 6.8% (26)	50.8% (194) 55.5% (212)
PRAC 244 Practicum I	16.2% (62) 3.1% (12)	11.3% (43) 12.8% (49)	10.7% (41) 16.8% (64)	5.0% (19) 3.4% (13)	4.7% (18) 5.5% (21)	52.1% (199) 58.4% (223)
PRAC 245 Practicum II	16.0% (61) 3.1% (12)	11.8% (45) 12.3% (47)	10.7% (41) 16.8% (64)	5.0% (19) 3.7% (14)	4.7% (18) 5.8% (22)	51.8% (198) 58.4% (223)

- Extension and distance education seems to be the most popular training options for courses. This may be due to limited information when respondents were completing the survey.
- Interest was shown for using PLAR for practicums.

Diploma Courses

- Training method preference was similar for Diploma courses to that of Certificate courses with the highest interest in PLAR for practicums.

8). *What are the barriers for upgrading your credentials*?

76.4%(292)	no response
11.3%(43)	finances
6.3%(24)	time commitment
2.6% (10)	availability of courses offered
3.4% (13)	other (family obligations, learning disability, etc.)

- Family commitments, child care, close to retiring from field, location of courses offered, age, etc.

C) *Orientation for PLAR Advisors/Assessors*

Advisors:

Current methodology for orientating the PLAR Designated Contact (refer to Appendix F for a list of responsibilities) has been successful. It is recommended that yearly reviews of PLAR practices be updated with the PLAR Designated Contacts and any new contacts be orientated as soon as they assume the position to avoid misinforming PLAR candidates. Contacts should also be updated on any changes to the PLAR process throughout the year.

Enhanced communication between the Program Contacts (refer to Appendix F for responsibilities) at each of the three campuses (Kelsey, Wascana, and Woodland) is essential to maintain consistent flow of information for all PLAR candidates.

Assessors:

Assessors observed periodical break down of communication between the three program contacts (three campuses) and candidates which led to confusion in the following areas:

- Due dates for submission of evidence;
- Specific ways that candidates need to prepare evidence for submission (e.g. need to follow the standard experience outline format required by students is not necessary for PLAR challenges);
- When candidates call contacts for clarification of expectations of evidence and the information discussed is not forwarded on to the assessor;

- Candidates are unsure as to who and where they need to submit their evidence (the Project Coordinator acted as the main contact for candidates, Program Contacts and Assessors); and
- Diligence in maintaining a clear understanding of what PLAR is and the processes to follow when talking to candidates by ECE program contacts and counselors.

D) *Pilot and Refine PLAR Assessment Tools/Processes*

Assessment Tools

The following comments were reported by candidates and assessors:

- some of the assessment tools were unclear to both the assessor and candidate;
- when a candidate has a choice of evidence to submit, it needs to be very clear, the candidate must inform the either the Program Contact or Assessor of the choice prior to the submission of evidence;
- the assessment tools need to be specific enough so that candidates know what is expected but yet they also need to be open enough to allow candidates to provide evidence in a variety of ways;
- interviews done by phone are effective to accommodate candidates unable to meet directly with assessors due to geographic locations;
- assessment tools must be updated to accommodate changes in regulations, government funding (subsidy) and course changes;
- considerations need to be incorporated into assessment tools to accommodate First Nations candidates while not compromising the course outcomes; and
- comments from candidates and assessors regarding the assessment tools need to be addressed on a regular basis to maintain program standards and reflect course revisions.

PLAR Assessment Processes

The following comments were reported by candidates and assessors:

- Flexibility of assessor's schedule to accommodate evening and weekend interviews is an asset to the process; and
- The availability to complete challenges only twice a year (January and May/June) is restricting for many candidates especially those that are required to upgrade credentials in order to maintain employment in licensed facilities. It was suggested that assessments be available through out the year. Many candidates would prefer to complete only one assessment at a time (especially if it is their first challenge) but feel pressured to register for two or three challenges at each intake.

E) Marketing of the PLAR Process

Many people were very confused about what PLAR is, how it could benefit them and how to start the process. Many early childhood educators were also confused about the difference between a SIAST ECE Certificate or Diploma and the certification awarded by the Child Day Care Branch to meet Regulations.

6. Recommendations and Next Steps for Future PLAR Implementation

Recommendations

- Assessment tools need to reflect course revisions well in advance of implementation date. Work with Program, Research and Development to implement a built-in mechanism to trigger such revisions.

- To maximize response rate for future "Gap Analysis" surveys, consider the following prior to requesting the completion of the survey:
  - Educate the target group about the PLAR process and its benefits; and
  - Allow sector time to absorb regulatory changes and the implications of the changes.

- Design a brochure that outlines the PLAR process and training options for mass distribution to target group through:
  - Mail outs through regulatory bodies (e.g. Child Day Care Branch);
  - Post on supporting association websites (e.g. Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association); and
  - Information tables set up a provincial conferences.

- Assign a centralized coordinator within the education or training provider to coordinate PLAR implementation.

- Design a strategy to promote and market PLAR to all stakeholders:
    - Emphasize benefits that PLAR can provide to overcome barriers to receiving credentials;
    - Identify 'natural' groupings of target audience (conferences, meetings, etc.) and deliver presentations to encourage involvement and support from stakeholders; and
    - Market SIAST PLAR CD(video).

- Enhance existing linkages and partnerships throughout regions and among aboriginal and non-aboriginal community partners to share information, dialogue, problem solve and coordinate initiatives.

- Create flexibility for conducting assessments at various times of the year to accommodate the demand.

- Access to pre-assessment guidance is critical for mapping an appropriate learning/training plan for employee, adult learner, and employer. Align the PLAR assessment intakes to the same timelines for Extension semesters and explore the feasibility of a continuous intake to best accommodate appropriate learning/training plans.

- Develop web-based documents where appropriate. (e.g. Information and Self-Audit Guide). Revisit navigation links to ensure ready access to information on a regular basis.

- When designing a survey instrument provide an expanded, detailed section which identifies barriers to working towards credentials.

Next Steps

- Dissemination of the final report to Steering Committee Members and stakeholders.
- Explore the viability of a centralized coordinator within the education/training institution to coordinate PLAR implementation.
- Design a strategy to promote and market PLAR to all stakeholders:
  -emphasize the benefits that PLAR can provide to overcome barriers to receiving credentials;
  -identify 'natural' groupings of target audience (conferences, meetings, Child Day Care Branch, FSIN, etc.); and
  -market the SIAST PLAR CD (video).

- SIAST should continue to take the lead in facilitating meetings of the Steering Committee to ensure that strategies and recommendations developed in the report are addressed.

Appendix A

Regulation Changes:

The Child Care Regulations
Being
Chapter C-7.3 Reg 1 (effective November 2, 1990)
As amended by Saskatchewan Regulations 66/92, 29/95,and 77/96.

Staff Qualifications

36(1) Every individual employed in a centre shall be at least 16 years of age.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), every licensee shall ensure that every individual employed as a child care worker completes, within six months of commencing employment as a child care worker, an orientation course for child care workers offered through the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology unless the individual has completed an equivalent orientation or training course.

(3) Every operator shall ensure that by July 1, 1993, the supervisor or, where the supervisor is not directly responsible for the programming and supervision of child care services, the person responsible for these services shall have a minimum of:

(a) a certificate in child care from a recognized educational facility; or

(b) education or training equivalent to the certificate mentioned in clause (a).

(4) Every operator shall ensure that by July 1, 1991, at least one staff member who has completed a first aid course is on the premises during the hours of operation of the centre.

2 Nov 90 cC-7.3 Reg 1 s36.

The Child Care Regulations, 2001
Being
Chapter C-7.3 Reg 2 (effective July 5, 2201) as
amended by tan Errata Notice* published in
The Saskatchewan Gazette on September 28, 2001

Child Care Workers

41(1) A licensee of a centre must ensure that all child care workers employed in the centre are at least 16 years of age.

(2) Subject to subsections (3) to (6), a licensee of a centre must ensure that all persons employed in the centre as child care workers for 65 hours or more per month meet or exceed the qualifications for a child care worker set out in subsection 36(2) of the former regulations.

(3) On and after January 1, 2002, a licensee of a centre must ensure that all persons employed in the centre as child care workers for 65 hours or more per month meet or exceed the qualifications of an early childhood educator I.

(4) On and after January 1, 2005, a licensee of a centre must ensure that 30% of the persons employed in the centre as child care workers for 65 hours or more per month meet or exceed the qualifications of an early childhood educator II.

(5) On and after January 1, 2007, a licensee of a centre must ensure that, in addition to the persons mentioned in subsection (4), a further 20% of the persons employed in the centre as child care workers for 65 hours or more per month meet or exceed the qualifications of an early childhood educator III.

(6) In calculating the percentages mentioned in subsections (4) and (5), the centre director and any supervisors are to be included.

28 Sep 2001 cC-7.3 Reg 2 s41.

Guidelines

Classification as an ECE I is granted upon successful completion of a 120 hour introduction to early childhood course through Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology or 120 hours of equivalent education or training.

Classification as an ECE II is granted upon successful completion of a one year early childhood certificate from a recognized college in Canada or 520 hours of equivalent education or training.

Classification as an ECE III is granted upon successful completion of a two year early childhood diploma from a recognized college in Canada or 1060 hours equivalent education or training.

CDC Licensee's Manual August 1, 2002

Appendix B

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Early Childhood Education
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
Literature Review

	Red River College Winnipeg, MB	Douglas College Greater Vancouver, BC	SIAST Wascana (Regina), Kelsey (Saskatoon), and Woodland (Prince Albert) Campuses
Experience Requirements	-minimum of 2 years full time or equivalent in part-time experience working in a licensed children's centre or family day care home with children between the ages of 12 weeks and 12 years	-no specific experience required because they feel that a time requirement focuses the candidate on their experience, rather than their learning from their experience -they must have worked in the field (not related field) for a number of years in more than one setting to ensure that they can transfer their learning and skills to more than one setting -the ECE coordinator makes the judgment (in consultation with faculty specialists) whether the candidate is eligible or not for PLAR	-minimum 2 years of current, successful experience within the past 5 years in an early childhood setting
Schedule for PLAR Challenges	-applications are accepted 8 months per year, from Sept. 1- May 1 and reviewed according to date of application	-college policy requires students to enroll for PLAR challenges at the beginning of each semester	-2 intakes per year: January (must register by November 15) and May (must register by March 15)

	Red River College Winnipeg, MB	Douglas College Greater Vancouver, BC	SIAST Wascanca(Regina), Kelsey(Saskatoon), and Woodland (Prince Albert) Campuses
Courses an Individual Can Challenge Through PLAR	-can challenge up to (but not more than) 75% of the program -challenges are offered course by course	-candidates can challenge up to 75% of a credential through the PLAR process -special permission is required to challenge more than 75% of a credential -challenges are offered course by course -some courses are mandatory for all students	-students can complete PLAR challenges for as many courses as they want -challenges are offered course by course
Fee Schedule for PLAR	-challenge exams cost $120.00 per course -skill demonstrations are $30.00/hour to a maximum of $150.00 per assessment -portfolio assessment is $150.00 per assessment	-cost is based on credit equivalency -3 credits-$245.10 -6 credits-$424.55 -9 credits-$609.20	-$30.00 one time PLAR registration fee and then an assessment fee is assigned for each course (fees range from $50.00/10 hour course - $300.00/comprehen-sive practicum)
PLAR Assessors	-base instructors have assessment time worked into their work loads	-base faculty complete PLAR assessments and paid extra to complete the assessments	-outside assessors are hired according to registration needs (cost recovery situation for PLAR challenges) -assessors must meet the same qualifications as base instructors
Refinement of Assessment Tools	-tools are updated as needed by base instructors	-refinement of tools are completed on a as-need basis -base faculty is requested to complete refinement of tools	-tools are being refined by the PLAR Project Coordinator but will become the responsibility of the base program (possibly done as regular up keep on courses)

	Red River College Winnipeg, MB	Douglas College, Greater Vancouver, BC	SIAST Wascana (Regina), Kelsey (Saskatoon), and Woodland (Prince Albert) Campuses
Additional Information	-students may apply for 1 course at a time (the time frame for completion of challenge process is 6 months) -students wishing to apply for PLAR must attend a PLAR Orientation session (2 hours in length held bi-monthly throughout the academic year)	-the college-wide PLAR service processes all PLAR requests to ensure that they are being responded to in a timely manner and that faculty are paid for the assessment work	-

Appendix C

Early Childhood Education Certification Survey

This survey has been initiated to identify the training needs of the province's early childhood educators.
Instructions:
Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. All information collected will remain confidential.

Using a pen or dark pencil, darken the circles completely as shown below.

Like this: ● **Not like this:** ✗ ✓ ◐

1. Are you currently employed by: (mark all that apply)

   O a licensed daycare centre
   O a licensed family child care home
   O a preschool
   O an unlicensed family child care home
   O other (please specify) _____

2. Work Postal Code: _____

3. Do you possess the following pre-requisites for the Certificate and Diploma programs: Grade 12, English Language Arts A30 and B30? ..... Yes O

4. If you have had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Day Care Branch answer Box A
   If you have not had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Day Care Branch answer Box B.

Box A – I have had an assessment				Box B – I have not had an asses
Indicate the highest level of **certification** you have.				Indicate the highest level of **education** yo possess.
O Early Childhood Educator I (120 course hrs)				O 120-hour introductory course
O Early Childhood Educator II (Certificate)				O Certificate in Early Childhood Educatio
O Early Childhood Educator III (Diploma)				O Diploma in Early Childhood Education
Are you required to upgrade?	Yes	No	If yes, go to question 5. If no, you are now done this survey. Thank you.	O Other (please specify): _____
	O	O		

5. Do you possess any courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc. from another accredited institution that may qualify for transfer credit to a SIAST course? ..... Yes O

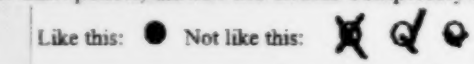
   If yes, please specify: _____

Full time Par

Early Childhood Education Certification Survey

This survey has been initiated to identify the training needs of the province's early childhood educators.
Instructions:
Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. All information collected will remain confidential.

Using a pen or dark pencil, darken the circles completely as shown below.

Like this: ● Not like this: 

1. Are you currently employed by: (mark all that apply)

   O a licensed daycare centre
   O a licensed family child care home
   O a preschool
   O an unlicensed family child care home
   O other (please specify) _____

2. Work Postal Code: _____

	Yes
3. Do you possess the following pre-requisites for the Certificate and Diploma programs: Grade 12, English Language Arts A30 and B30?	O

4. If you have had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Day Care Branch answer Box A
   If you have not had an assessment of your qualifications done by the Day Care Branch answer Box B.

Box A – I have had an assessment				Box B – I have not had an asses
Indicate the highest level of **certification** you have.				Indicate the highest level of **education** yo possess.
O Early Childhood Educator I (120 course hrs)				O 120-hour introductory course
O Early Childhood Educator II (Certificate)				O Certificate in Early Childhood Educatio
O Early Childhood Educator III (Diploma)				O Diploma in Early Childhood Education
Are you required to upgrade?	Yes O	No O	If yes, go to question 5. If no, you are now done this survey. Thank you.	O Other (please specify): _____

	Yes
5. Do you possess any courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc. from another accredited institution that may qualify for transfer credit to a SIAST course?	O

If yes, please specify: _____

Full time Par

6. Would you prefer to enrol in courses on a full-time or part-time basis? ..... O

7. Which method do you think you might use to obtain credit for Early Childhood Education courses?
   - Indicate your first **and** second choice
   - Only make selections by courses that you need – leave others blank

PLAR = Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
EXT = Extension - part-time evening or day
DE = Distance Education - independent study (correspondence)
BP = Base Program - full-time student at either Kelsey (Saskatoon), Wascana (Regina) or Woodland (Prin
RC = Regional College - courses or programs offered through local Regional Colleges

Certificate	Preferred Method					Second Cho		
	PLAR	EXT	DE	BP	RC	PLAR	EXT	DE
Child Development Courses								
ECE 142 Health, Safety and Nutrition (50hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 181 Observation of Children (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HUMD 181 Lifespan Development A (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Relationship Courses								
COMM 153 Communication Techniques (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
COMM 291 Interpersonal Communications (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HUMD 183 Child Guidance (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HUMR 181 Professionalism I (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SOCI 142 Family and Community Relations (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SUPP 182 Helping Skills (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Programming Courses								
ECE 182 Programming I (35 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 183 Programming II (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 184 Programming III (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 185 Programming IV (45 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HUMD 182 Play and Play Environments (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Related Courses								
CPR 180 "CPR" (12 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
FAID 189 First Aid (15 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRAC 178 Practicum I (80 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Certificate	Preferred Method					Second Cho		
	PLAR	EXT	DE	BP	RC	PLAR	EXT	DE
Child Development Courses								
PRAC 179 Practicum II (80 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRAC 180 Practicum III (160 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRAC 181 Practicum IV (160 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

PLAR = Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
EXT = Extension - part-time evening or day
DE = Distance Education - independent study (correspondence)
BP = Base Program - full-time student at either Kelsey (Saskatoon), Wascana (Regina) or Woodland (Prin
RC = Regional College - courses or programs offered through local Regional Colleges

Diploma	Preferred Method					Second Cho		
	PLAR	EXT	DE	BP	RC	PLAR	EXT	DE
Child Development Courses								
*ECE 221 Observation and Assessment (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HUMD 280 Lifespan Development B (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
*ECE 225 Infant and Toddler Care (35 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
*Note: *ECE 221* and *ECE 225* also meet **Programming** requirements								
Relationship Courses								
COMM 294 Verbal Communications (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 281 Agency Visitation (10 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
MGMT 281 Behavioural Principles & Practices (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PD 240 Professionalism II (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRLP 282 Foundations of Early Childhood Ed. (30 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Programming Courses								
ECE 220 Anti-Bias Curriculum (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ECE 226 Program for School Age (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Related Courses								
ADMN 249 Administration for Early Childhood Ed. (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
ADMN 281 Administrative Functions (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
BKPG 240 Record Keeping For Child Care Facilities (35 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

PLAR = Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
EXT = Extension - part-time evening or day
DE = Distance Education - independent study (correspondence)
BP = Base Program - full-time student at either Kelsey (Saskatoon), Wascana (Regina) or Woodland (Prin
RC = Regional College - courses or programs offered through local Regional Colleges

Diploma	**Preferred Method**					**Second Cho**		
Child Development Courses	**PLAR**	**EXT**	**DE**	**BP**	**RC**	**PLAR**	**EXT**	**DE**
SPSY 281 Studies of Exceptionality A (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
SPSY 289 Children with Diverse Abilities (40 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRAC 244 Practicum I (240 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
PRAC 245 Practicum II (240 hrs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

8. What are the barriers for upgrading your credentials? (Select all that apply.)

Time commitment	Funding	Availability of courses offered	Other (please
O	O	O	O

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix D

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ECE PLAR Program Contact Checklist

Student_____ Date_____

PLAR Program Contact_____ Campus _____

4. _____ Completed "Application for Prior Learning Assessment" form

5. _____ Ensure student has received a copy of assessment tool for each PLAR challenge.

6. _____ Completed "ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview" form
   ____ a) student received a copy
   ____ b) copy made available for Assessor

7. _____ Ensured that payment for each assessment has been made to Registration Services

Confirmed by_____date_____

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ECE PLAR Program Contact Student Interview

ECE PLAR Contact_____ Date_____

Student _____Phone (h)_____(w)_____

Campus: _____Wascana _____ Kelsey _____Woodland

Course Code_____ ***Course Title***_____

Assessment Date (month/year) _____

Student Received Copy of Assessment Tool ____yes ____no

Instructions for Student and Assessor (be specific):

Program Contact _____ Student _____

Course Code_____ Course Title_____

Assessment Date (month/year) _____

Student Received Copy of Assessment Tool ____yes ____no

Instructions for Student and Assessor (be specific):

Program Contact _____Student_____

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ECE PLAR Interview/Exam Supervision Submission Form

PLEASE NOTE: Students are responsible for making arrangements to find a qualified person in your local community to supervise the interview/exam (ie. Your supervisor, teacher, principal, etc.). You must interview or write in a course setting (school, college, library, etc.).
Test Centres are available at all SIAST Campuses:
Kelsey: 933-7269 Palliser: 694-3266 Wascana: 798-0229 Woodland: 953-7106

RETURN COMPLETED FORM BY:_____

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Student Name:_____

Course:_____

Interview/Exam Date:_____ Time:_____

Interview/Exam Location:_____

Interview/EXAM SUPERVISOR INFORMATION:

Name:_____

Position/Title:_____

Facility/Organization:_____

Address:_____

City/Town:_____ Postal Code:_____

Telephone:_____ Fax: _____

Signature of Interview/Exam Supervisor:_____

FAX OR MAIL TO: **Susanne McElhinney**
Early Childhood Education
SIAST Wascana Campus
Box 556
Regina, SK S4P 3A3
Fax: (306) 798-0372

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Early Childhood Education
PLAR Student Survey

Please complete the following questions. All information is confidential. If additional space is required, use the reverse side. Thank you for completing this survey, your concerns and suggestions are important to us.

1. How did you learn about the PLAR training option for Early Childhood Education Programs?

2. Describe your PLAR experience. Was it positive? Why or why not?

3. Would you consider the PLAR process to obtain credit for future courses? Why or why not?

4. Would you recommend the PLAR process to other Early Childhood Educators? Why or why not?

5. How could we improve the PLAR process in the future?

Appendix E

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Early Childhood Education

Dana Sych, ECE PLAR Project Coordinator

(306) 798-0737

sych@siast.sk.ca

How can I update my credentials?

- Base Program
- Distance Education
- Extension
- Regional Colleges
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Why should I consider a PLAR assessment?

- New Saskatchewan Child Care Regulations (July 5, 2001) have mandated minimum levels of education for all early childhood educators working in a licensed facility
- Receive recognition for skills and knowledge acquired on the job
- Potential for pay increases with formal recognition of skills and knowledge

How do I know if I am a candidate for PLAR?

- You have at least 2 years of current successful experience within the past 5 years
- you can provide evidence of your skills and knowledge to meet the program's learning outcomes

How do I begin the PLAR process?

- Consult with a designated PLAR contact
- Attend a PLAR audit meeting with the ECE program PLAR contact
- Develop an action plan

- Pay registration and course assessment fees
- Gather your evidence according to the PLAR challenge and submit it to your assessor
- ECE PLAR assessor facilitates and evaluates the evidence you submit
- Candidate is notified of results
- Credit is either recommended or not recommended

Examples of Evidence

- resource list
- written description and analysis
- experience (activity) outlines
- observations
- work samples
- photos or videos
- challenge exam
- interviews
- skill demonstrations

When can I complete a PLAR challenge?

- January (registration deadline is November 15)
- May (registration deadline is March 15)

What will it cost to register for a PLAR challenge?

- A $30.00 application fee is charged to initiate your PLAR request
- Each course will be assigned an assessment fee

Which courses can I challenge through PLAR?

- Certificate - 17 out of 20 courses currently available
- Diploma - 15 out of 17 courses currently available

Appendix F

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Candidate Process for Prior Learning Assessment

1. Consult with PLAR Designated Contact (Campus Program Counselor)
    - Discuss process and forms
    - Identify courses for challenge
    - Match your skills and learning to course outcomes
    - Complete a PLAR self-audit
2. Apply for PLAR
3. PLAR Audit Meeting
    - Meet with Program Contact (ECE Program Head)
    - Review the self-audit
    - Determine eligibility
    - Obtain approval for PLAR courses
4. Pay Course Assessment Fees
5. Develop an Action Plan
    - Consult with Program contact
6. Prepare for Prior Learning Assessment
    - Follow an action plan
    - Collect, create and compile evidence
    - Obtain validations
    - Meet timelines
7. Assessor (ECE instructor) Facilitates the Challenge
8. Assessor Evaluates the Challenge
9. Grade Code is Submitted to the Registrar
10. Client is Notified of Results